

# Metabolic Screening in children on Antipsychotic medications

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# Background

## Antipsychotic Medications

Roughly **245,000** children in Louisiana have a diagnosable mental disorder

Although these drugs were originally developed for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, in Louisiana they are frequently prescribed "**off-label**" for:

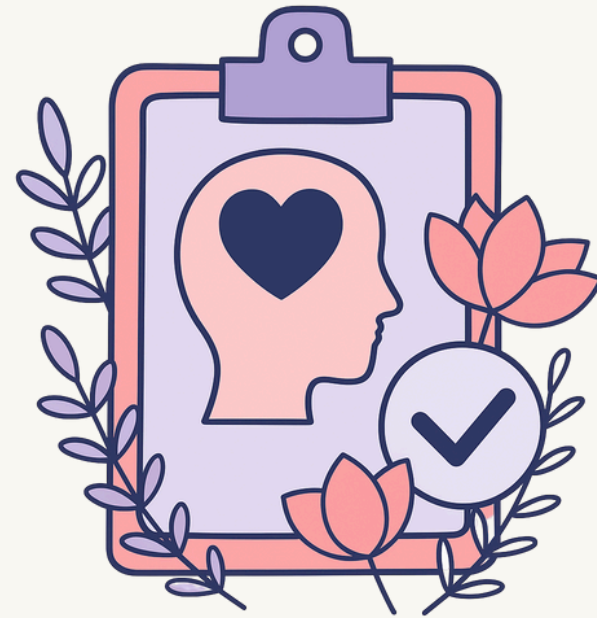
1. **ADHD** with aggressive behavior (the most common reason)
2. **Conduct** and **Disruptive** Behavior Disorders
3. **Autism-related irritability**

Current LDH policy requires metabolic monitoring (testing for weight gain, diabetes, and cholesterol) **every six months** for any child in Louisiana on these medications, as they are considered high-risk for long-term health issues.

**Rapid weight gain:** Many children experience a significant increase in **appetite** and body fat.

**Insulin Resistance:** These medications can interfere with how the body processes sugar, potentially leading to **Type 2 diabetes**.

**High cholesterol:** Changes in **blood lipids** (triglycerides and cholesterol) are common, even if the child doesn't gain a lot of weight.



## Side effects of antipsychotics

**Akathisia:** A child may pace constantly or be unable to sit still for even a few minutes.

**Dystonia:** Sudden, painful muscle spasms or "freezing," often in the neck or eyes (oculogyric crisis)

**Tardive Dyskinesia (TD):** A serious, sometimes permanent condition involving involuntary, repetitive movements like lip-smacking, tongue thrusting, or rapid blinking. This usually develops after long-term use.

# Project Focus



Measure the percentage of children and adolescents age 11-17 years of age who had two or more antipsychotic prescriptions and had metabolic testing during 2021- October 2025



Compare based on Gender, Primary Language spoken, LDH Region, Rural vs urban, and Year



Metabolic testing measures include:

Only blood glucose testing

Only cholesterol testing

Both blood glucose and cholesterol testing





# Project Significance

Highlights barriers to health access in Louisiana

Identifies vulnerable populations at risk of poor care

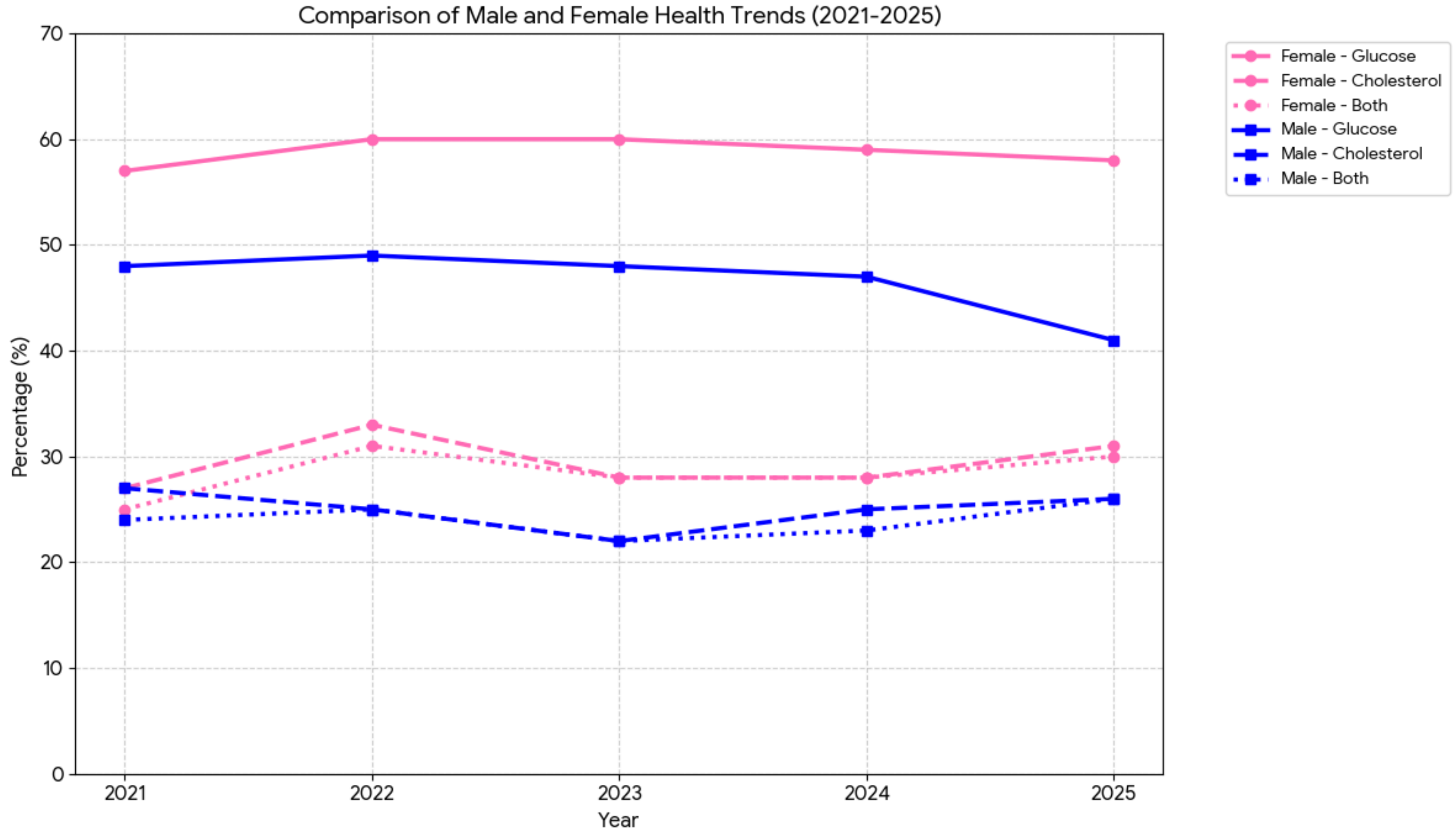
Supports strategies to improve equitable access

# Overall Yearly Trends

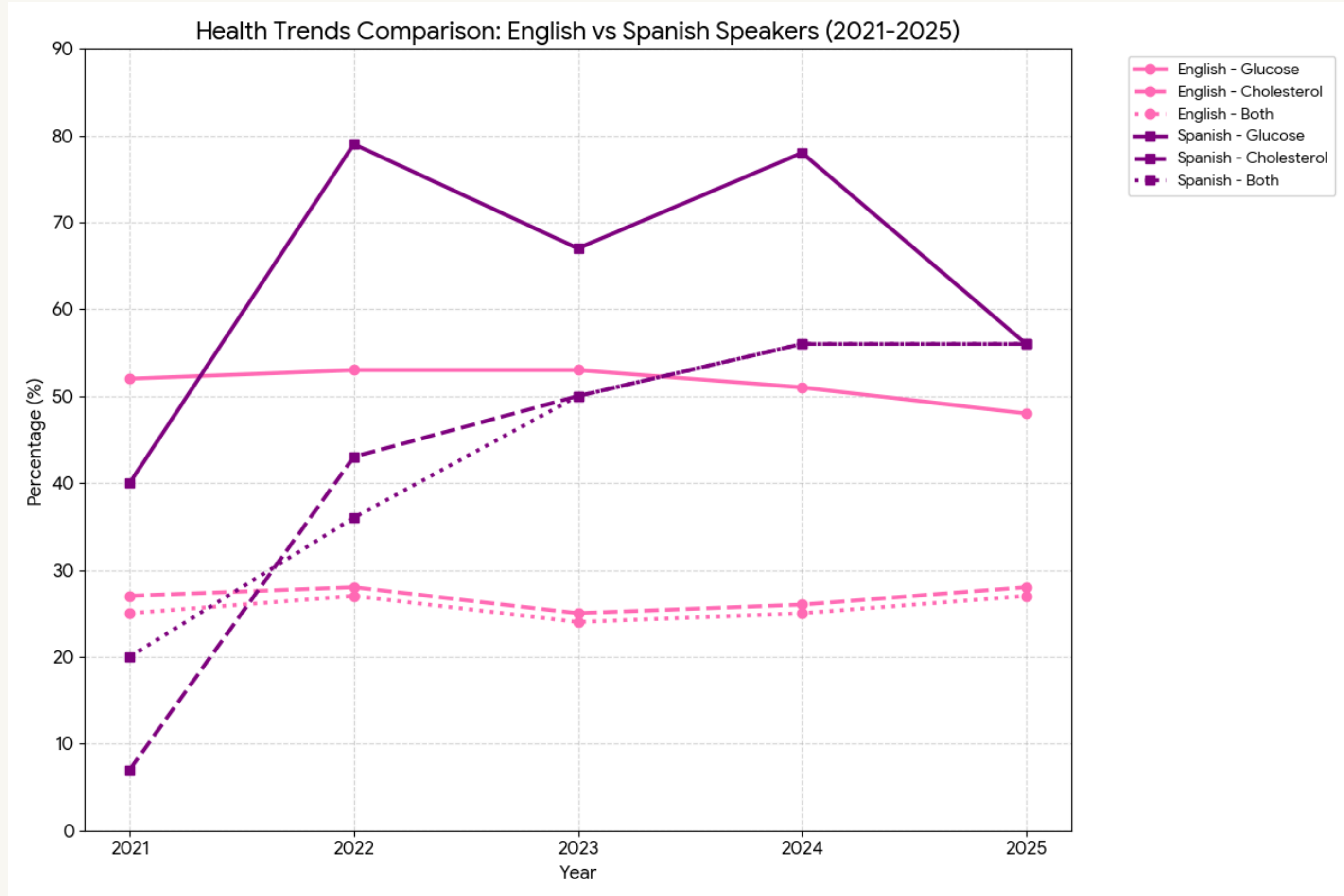
Metabolic Screening Trends: Children on Antipsychotics (2021-2025)



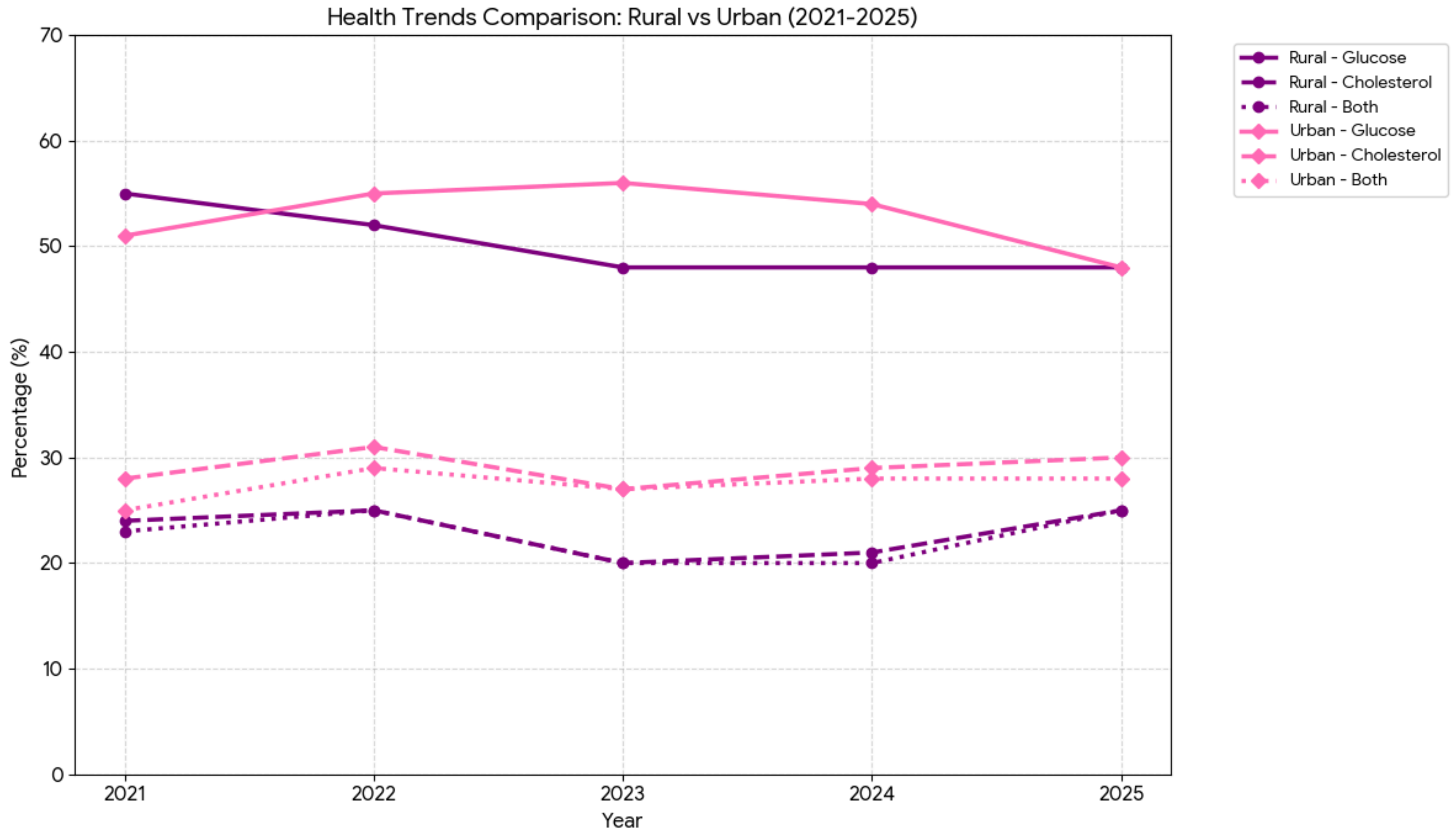
# Yearly Gender Trends



# Yearly Trends Based on Primary Spoken Language

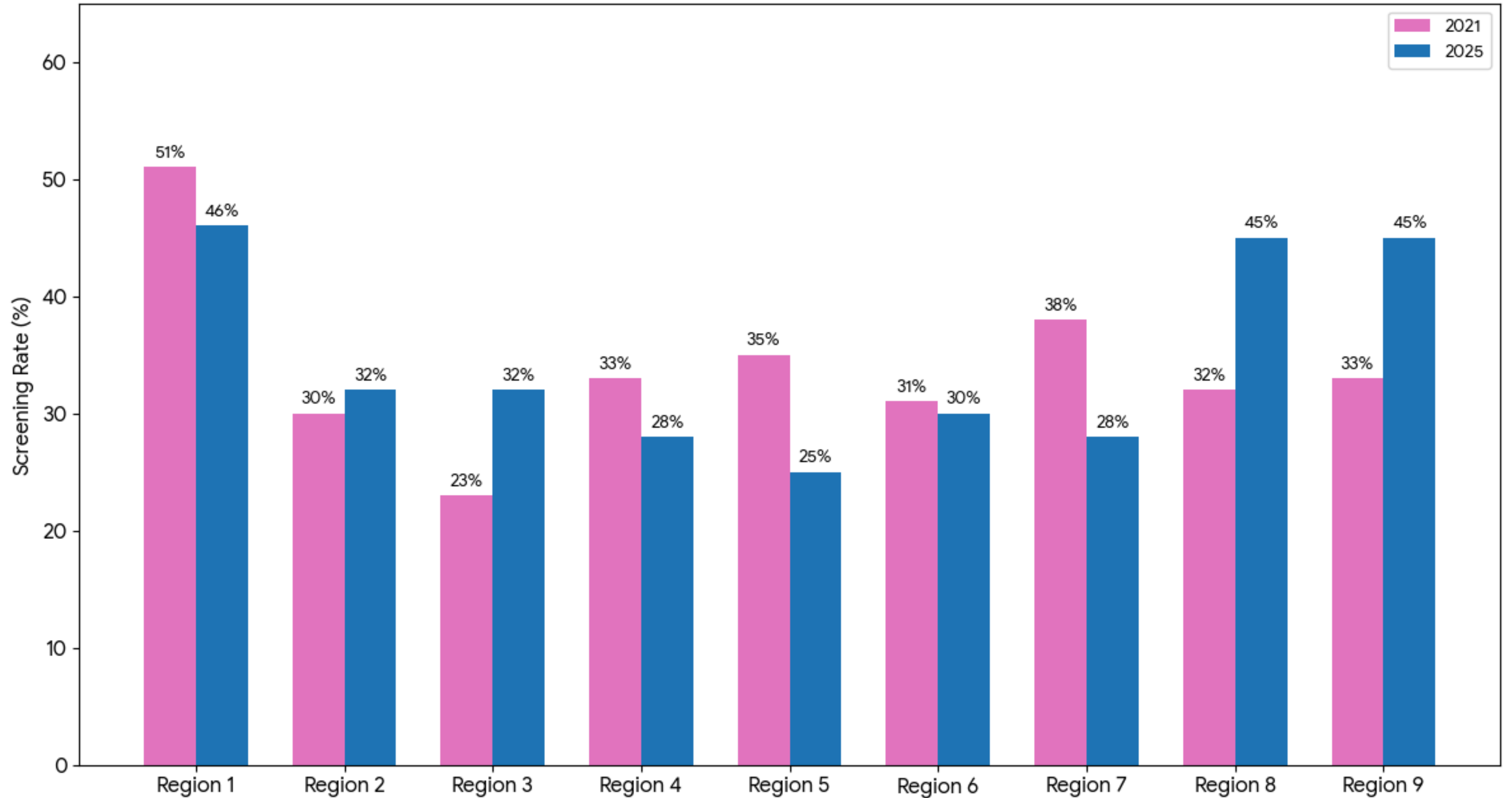


# Yearly Trends Based on Rural vs Urban



# LDH Trends

Overall Metabolic Screening Rates by LDH Region (2021 vs 2025)





# Main Points

## Glucose

Overall for every category, **glucose** screening was the **highest** testing received

## Females

**Females** had a **higher** rate of receiving screening tests compared to **males** in every sub-measure

## Regions

**Regions 3, 8, and 9** showed the most **improvement** in screening overall while significant **drops** in **Regions 5 and 7**

# Suggestions for improvement

## **Incentives**

Providing incentives to primary care providers who order appropriate metabolic screening for patients on antipsychotic medications

Providers could receive additional incentives if they begin following the ADA/APA (American Diabetes Association/American Psychiatric Association) guidelines for metabolic screening

Create a "Health Passport." Each completed lab visit earns a stamp with all metabolic screening receiving a special stamp. A certain amount of stamps might unlock a larger community-sponsored reward

## **Community engagement for patients**

Peer led health huddles: mentors lead small, informal "huddles" at local cafes or parks specifically targeting males

## ADA/APA Monitoring Schedule for Children on Antipsychotics

Metabolic Screening Metric	Timeline of Treatment					
	Baseline	4 Weeks	8 Weeks	12 Weeks	Quarterly	Annually
Weight / BMI	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Blood Pressure	Required	-	-	Required	Required	Required
Glucose / A1c	Required	-	-	Required	-	Required
Lipid Profile	Required	-	-	Required	-	Required

Thank You!



# Sources

Louisiana Medicaid Antipsychotics Prior Authorization Criteria (2024–2025)

American Diabetes Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, & North American Association for the Study of Obesity. (2004). Consensus development conference on antipsychotic drugs and obesity and diabetes. *Diabetes Care*, 27(2), 596–609

Louisiana Mental Health Profiles (2024-2025)

Louisiana Department Health Needs Assessment Report 2021